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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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Subject: "Industrial Feeding Experts Share Experiences" Information from
Office of Marketing Services officials, War Food Administration.

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When you sit around a table and share experiences and problems with each other you usually go back to your job...whatever it is...feeling refreshed and full of new ideas.

That is the experience of over a dozen food service directors who meet together in New Jersey every month to talk over their problems. Most of the men and women who take part in the meetings are in charge of cafeterias and lunch rooms in large industrial plants. They are responsible for the meals that thousands of war workers eat on their jobs.

With the help of an industrial nutrition specialist from the War Food Administration and the Chairman of the Essex County Industrial Nutrition committee they set up their objectives...that is...they all have the same goal to work toward...better food for more people. They keep that goal in sight when they bring up their problems for discussion. Many of the questions they raise are the same ones a group of housewives might talk about.

Menu planning, for example, is a number one worry. Food conservation is another...not only how to use left-overs, but how to better refrigerate the food. They are much concerned too, with saving the food nutrients by not overcooking fruits and vegetables and by using the vegetable juices. But one of the really hard problems was how to persuade the men and women to eat well balanced meals.

You homemakers probably have the same difficulty. No matter how carefully you plan meals and cook the food, if your family eats only part of it your effort and your time is lost. Lunch time at home and in war plants is usually short and

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hurried. Whatever information the workers pick-up at that time has to be done "on the run", so to speak.

War Food Administration posters that recommend the Basic Seven Foods including vegetables and milk and other protective foods are in use by most of the plants. Table cards are popular, too. Sometimes they explain seriously what a balanced meal is. Sometimes clever little cartoons carry the same message. Some of the plants distributed free literature at the cafeteria doors...literature that explains why yellow and green vegetables are important in the diet, or how citrus fruits and tomatoes improve a person's health.

These food service directors exchange their own ideas and visit other industrial plants in New Jersey to get more suggestions on ways to improve their kitchens and cafeteria service. Invitations are issued to about 50 persons who conduct food services in war plants, asking them to join the group. Six inspection trips were made last year. Of course, not everyone could go along on all the visits, but usually the group numbered a dozen or more. The exchange of ideas was so fruitful, the get-togethers are continuing this year.

At the conclusion of each trip the guests talk over the observations each had made. On one trip, for example, they visited an electric and manufacturing company. Everyone commented on how immaculate the kitchen looked, and they all admired the salad counter. Someone called it a symphony of color and the manager admitted that the attractive counter was her hobby. She pointed out that salads were very popular in their cafeteria, and she felt sure that the use of many colors was largely responsible. Knowing that Americans as a people don't eat enough salad greens she was proud, in a modest way, of her success with salads.

Another trip took the group into a plant where 95 percent of the workers ate in the cafeteria. Prices were very reasonable, averaging about 28 cents a meal. The cafeteria, according to comments from the group, was one of the most cheerful they had ever seen. The manager was convinced that people will eat a more complete



meal if they can sit down in a restful, relaxing atmosphere. Homemakers, too, have found that their families eat better meals if the room is quiet and attractive.

In each plant the group visited, a different feature was outstanding in the food service. One of the most extensive of the inspection trips took place at an aeronautical plant where 12,000 workers are served a meal every 24 hours. Can you imagine the work involved in a job like that? As the manager said...and most homemakers will probably agree...the secret of feeding people well is to provide good food. He believes that good food is its own best salesman. This manager with 12,000 people to feed every day was especially particular that the meats were well cooked not...overcooked. And made it a point to have the raw vegetables crisp and the cooked vegetables steamed in a small amount of water, and seasoned just right. These tips from an expert are worth remembering.

One of the later trips took the group to a plant where the cafeteria specialty was a Victory Plate Lunch which the manager served for 35 cents. The lunch was a complete, well-balanced meal, so carefully planned that most of the workers preferred the Victory Plate Lunch instead of the hit-or-miss meal they might select themselves. Each lunch included yellow or green vegetables or a salad as well as meat or an alternate.

Another plant featured in addition to the lunches, an afternoon snack of milk or tomato juice. The management felt sure that the additional food was responsible for raising the plant's production figures.

Every plant the food service directors visited had one or more outstanding feature. Even the experts agreed that an exchange of ideas helps to make wartime meals look good, taste good and helps to keep workers on their jobs.

Any homemaker who tries to feed her family the best she can, knows that it is helpful to share experiences with others, and to keep up to date on new ways to keep the family well fed in wartime.

